

chance he came up with the troops in the very place where he passed the boyish years in which he cherished what then seemed wild and fabulous dreams of his future fate. What thoughts and recollections must have crowded on his mind when he found himself an Emperor and a King, at the head of a yet powerful army, in the chateau of the Comte de Brienne, to whom he had so often paid his homage ! It was at Brienne that he had said to me, thirty-four years before, " I will do these Frenchmen all the harm I can." Since then he had certainly changed his mind; but it might be said that fate persisted in forcing the man to realize the design of the boy in spite of himself. No sooner had Napoleon revisited Brienne as a conqueror than he was repulsed and hurried to his fall, which became every moment more certain.¹

I shall not enter into any details of the campaign of France, because the description of battles forms no part of my plan. Still, I think it indispensable briefly to describe Napoleon's miraculous activity from the time of his leaving Paris to the entrance of the Allies into the capital. Few successful campaigns have enabled our Generals and the French army to reap so much glory as they gained during this great reverse of fortune. For it is possible to triumph without honor, and to fall with glory. The chances of the war were not doubtful, but certainly the numerous hosts of the Allies could never have anticipated so long and brilliant a resistance. The theatre of the military operations soon approached so near to Paris that the general eagerness for news from the army was speedily satisfied, and when any advantage was gained by the Emperor his partisans saw the enemy already repulsed from the French territory. I was not for a moment deceived by these illusions, as I well knew the determination and the resources of the Allied sovereigns. Besides, events were so rapid and various in this war of extermination that the guns of the Invalides announcing a victory were sometimes immediately followed by the distant

¹ An engagement took place at Brienne, and Napoleon, with 15,000 men, kept 80,000 Russians in check for twelve hours. — *Jeffourienne*.